

CITY OF BLYTHE

GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL REPORT



TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Planning Director Wellman

DATE: June 24, 2008

SUBJECT: General Plan Annual Report - Including Housing Element Report for 2007

LOCATION: City Wide

HOUSING POLICY
DEVELOPMENT, HCD
JUN 27 2008

BACKGROUND: Government Code Section 65400(b) requires that the planning agency of local governments provide an annual report to the legislative body on the status of the General Plan and progress in its implementation, including the progress in meeting its share of regional housing needs pursuant to Section 65584. Additionally, the annual report should include information concerning local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing pursuant to Section 65583 (c) (3). The annual report is required to be provided to the legislative body on or before July 1 of each year. The following information is provided in compliance with Government Code requirements.

Status of General Plan and Implementation Process

General Plan Elements: On March 23, 2007, the Blythe City Council adopted a comprehensive update to its General Plan (1989 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Blythe). The updated General Plan will guide the long-term development of the City of Blythe, the existing Sphere of Influence and three new Planning Areas, through land use planning, policy implementation and establishment of development guidelines through 2025.

General Plan 2025 includes the following Elements:

- Community Design;
- Land Use;
- Circulation
- Housing (Adopted 11/2004)
- Open Space and Conservation;
- Parks and Recreation;
- Safety;
- Noise; and,
- Colorado River Corridor (Area) Plan.

The Housing Element [which was adopted in November 2004 and was valid through the current planning period which ended January 1, 2006] was not updated with the balance of the General Plan. A comprehensive update of the Housing Element is currently underway, with completion scheduled in mid-2008.

General Plan 2025 addresses citywide concerns about growth and conservation. Topics such as resource management, community design, affordable housing, safety, noise, and community services are included because they all have physical and environmental implications that are critical to the creation of a sustainable community.

The policies of General Plan 2025 reflect the following overall themes:

- Sustainable Development that Balances Growth and Conservation;
- Resource-Based Planning;
- Protection of Agricultural and Natural Resources;
- Setting Urban Growth Limits;
- Enhancement of Community Character and Identity;
- Neighborhood-Oriented Development;
- Economic Development; and,
- Fostering Development Patterns that Offer Alternatives to Automobile Use.

The General Plan includes an Area Plan for the Colorado River Corridor area. The Colorado River Corridor planning area is approximately 6,000 acres in size and contains approximately 12-miles of Colorado River-front lands within the City limits and existing Sphere-of-Influence.

Although they are currently located outside of the City's Sphere-of-Influence, the City has included three new Planning Areas in General Plan 2025 that are relevant to the City's long term land use planning and policy efforts. One of the planning areas is located north of the existing City limits and/or Sphere-of-Influence adjacent to the Colorado River. The second area is located south of the existing sphere-of-influence boundary along the Colorado River, with the third planning area located north and west of the Blythe Municipal Golf Course.

Adoption (updated):	March 23, 2007
Amendments:	Resolution 07-699 - General Plan 2025 Adoption
2007 Amendments:	None
Pending Amendments:	None

**City of Blythe
General Plan Housing Element
2007 Annual Report**

The **Housing Element** identifies and analyzes existing and projected housing needs and includes a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, financial resources and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing. The housing element is required to identify adequate sites for housing, including rental housing, factory-built housing and mobile homes and also to make adequate provisions for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.

Adoption (updated): November 23, 2004

HCD Compliance Date: June 6, 2003

Amendments: Resolution 04-928 - Housing Element Update

Pending Amendments: A comprehensive update of the Housing Element is currently underway; with completion scheduled in mid-2008.

Status of Regional Housing Needs Allocation

Based on HCD's determination of regional housing need, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) assigns the amount of increased housing that each local unit of government within its region is expected to provide. This construction need is referred to as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment numbers or RHNA. Although SCAG, as the regional association of governments, assigns the RHNA numbers, the City of Blythe is also a member of the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), the sub-regional association. CVAG and its member cities, which includes the City of Blythe, work cooperatively in meeting their housing needs. SCAG assigns the RHNA numbers for the sub-region that includes Blythe. The construction need for Blythe, therefore, fulfills a portion of the total construction need that has been assigned for the sub-region.

For the 2006-2014 RHNA assignment period, the City of Blythe has been allocated 778 households-an increase of approximately 14% over the existing housing stock. **Table 1** provides the housing need projections, classified by income level, for the City as identified by SCAG.

**Table 1
Blythe Household Need Projection by Income Group
2006-2014**

Total Units	Very Low Income	Low Income	Moderate Income	Above Moderate Income
778	177	128	144	329

Table 2 provides the 2007 maximum San Bernardino/Riverside County very low, low, moderate and above moderate household income limits as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Although household incomes vary considerably throughout Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, the City is required to use countywide HUD income limits to evaluate housing affordability.

Table 2
2007 San Bernardino/Riverside County Maximum Household Income Limits

Income Group	Household Size				
	1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person
Very Low	\$20,700	\$23,700	\$26,650	\$31,950	\$31,950
Low	\$33,150	\$37,900	\$42,600	\$51,150	\$51,150
Moderate	\$41,400	\$47,400	\$53,300	\$63,900	\$63,900
Above Moderate	\$49,700	\$56,800	\$63,900	\$76,700	\$76,700

Source: Stradling Yocca Carlson & Rauth 2007 San Bernardino/Riverside County Affordable Housing Worksheet

Table 3 provides Blythe's household distribution by income group for the Year 1999 and an estimate for the Year 2005.

Table 3
Blythe's Household Distribution By Income Group

Income Group	1999 ¹ Number	(%)	2005 ² Number
Less than \$10,000	676	16.80%	734
\$10,000 - \$14,999	306	7.60%	332
\$15,000 - \$24,999	512	12.70%	555
\$25,000 - \$34,999	501	12.40%	542
\$35,000 - \$49,999	610	15.10%	660
\$50,000 - \$74,999	844	20.90%	913
\$75,999 - \$99,999	384	9.50%	415
\$100,000 - \$149,999	153	3.80%	166
\$150,000 - \$199,999	28	0.70%	31
\$200,000 +	20	0.50%	22

¹ Source: Census 2000

² Source: Unofficial Estimate by SCAG

Table 4 provides the corresponding sales price ranges for housing units in each income group based upon 2000 income limits.

Table 4
Affordable Rent and Purchase Price by Income Category
Year 2000

Type	Annual Income ¹	Affordable Rent Payment ²	Estimated Affordable Purchase Price ³
Extremely Low	Under \$14,220	\$356	Under \$50,000
Very Low	\$14,220 - \$23,700	\$357 - \$593	\$50,000 - \$85,000
Low	\$23,701 - \$37,920	\$594 - \$948	\$85,000 - \$130,000
Moderate	\$37,921 - \$56,880	\$949 - \$1,422	\$130,000 - \$180,000
Above Moderate	Over \$56,880	Over \$1,422	Over \$180,000

¹ Income limits established by HUD. Based on MFI of \$47,400 for Riverside County.

² Based on 30% of income.

³ Assumes 10% down payment, an 7.5% interest rate, 1.25% tax and homeowners insurance.

Source: Riverside County General Plan Housing Element

Table 5 shows the City's overall progress in meeting its share of the most recently projected regional housing needs. In 2007 the City added 81 new residential units, approximately 8.9% of the remaining identified need (718/81).

Table 5
City's Progress in Achieving Its Share
Of Projected Regional Housing Needs

Income Group Affordability	Housing Unit Allocation	Units Added			Remaining Need
		2007 ²	2006 ¹	Total for Planning Period	
Extremely Low	n/a	4	5	9	n/a ³
Very Low	177	9	27	36	132
Low	128	28	7	35	93
Moderate	144	10	9	19	125
Above Moderate	329	30	12	42	287
Total	778	81	60	141	637

¹ Distribution of housing units is based on building permit valuation increased by 30%.

² Distribution of housing units is based on building permit valuation increased by 35%.

³ Units have been subtracted from the very low remaining need.

Table 6 shows the City's overall progress in meeting its share of the 1998-2005 Planning Period projected regional housing need. During the Planning Period, the City added 596 new housing units; which represents approximately 70 percent (596/853) of the City's Regional Housing Need Allocation as set forth by SCAG. It should be noted that of the unmet need, 30 percent (257/853) was for above moderate housing.

Table 6
City's Progress In Achieving Its Share
Of Projected Regional Housing Needs

Income Group Affordability	Housing Unit Allocation	Units Added ¹									Remaining Need
		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total for 1998-2005	
Extremely Low			5	4	4	6	3	2	4	28	n/a ²
Very Low	234	21	42	27	11	15	2	6	6	130	76
Low	137	25	52	7	2	58	31	35	34	244 ³	-107
Moderate	166	2	28	0	0	47	0	69	32	178	-12
Above Moderate	316	1	4	1	0	1	0	2	7	16	300
Total	853	49	131⁴	39	17	127⁴	36	114	83	596	257

¹ Distribution of housing units is based on building permit valuation increased by 15%.

² Units have been subtracted from the very low remaining need.

³ Includes 37 units of 45 year deed restricted SFR.

⁴ Includes 81 units of 55 year deed restricted MFR.

Effectiveness in Meeting Goals and Objectives

Goal I – Overall Housing Production

Program 1 Water Infrastructure Capital Improvement

Status In January, 2007, the City dedicated its new water production and treatment facility. The new facility has a storage capacity of two mg; in combination with existing storage and recently improved delivery systems and capabilities, the City water system is able to serve the existing population and provide for [limited] future growth.

The City has extended an eight-inch water line to the community of Balzburg. The new line is serving 100± existing residential units; and will accommodate future units that may be constructed within the tie-in area.

Extension of an eight-inch water line, south on Riviera Drive, is planned to begin construction in mid-2008. When complete, the water line and additional storage will provide potable water to some 250 existing residential units; in addition to future units that may be constructed within the tie-in area.

Program 2 Sanitary Sewer Line Extensions

Status A twelve-inch force main within the community of Balzburg was completed in 2007. The new line is serving 100± existing residential units; and is sized to accommodate future growth in the area.

Program 3 Zoning Changes

Status With adoption of General Plan 2025, sufficient medium- and high-density residential lands have been designated to accommodate the projected housing needs of the community.

Program 4 Infill Land Use Inventory

Status A comprehensive land use inventory was completed in early 2007. Data from the inventory is being compiled and will be provided by the project consultant during the second quarter of 2008. Said information will be used in the Housing Element update.

Goal II – Housing Affordability

Program 6 Single Family Self Help Home Development Program Expansion

Status Although the City of Blythe/Blythe Redevelopment Agency are not in themselves developing a self help home program nor constructing self help homes, the City/RDA has in the past supported such projects both monetarily and with assistance through the entitlement process. The City of Blythe/RDA recognizes the importance of such programs/development; and will continue to encourage and support them.

Program 7 Rehabilitation of “Fixer-up Homes” by Low and Very Low Income Persons

Status For the last several years, the City of Blythe has made a monetary matching grant contribution towards Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment’s application for USDA Housing Preservation Grant funds. DACE has been successful in obtaining and administering the grant funds on behalf of the City of Blythe.

The City of Blythe is participating with the Riverside County Economic Development Agency to enhance home repair programs within the community.

Program 8 Mobile Home Park Upgrade

Status Eight of the nine mobile home parks within the City have been designated as “in substantial compliance” by the Chief Building Inspector/Fire Marshal. The remaining park has been re-inspected and follow-up compliance inspections are scheduled for 2008. Chief Building Inspector Covell is to be commended for his efforts over the last three years for: 1) having inspected all of the nine parks within the City; and 2) for having a [to-date] 88% “in substantial compliance” rate, with a goal of 100% compliance by the end of 2008.

Program 9 Various Mortgage Assistance Programs

Status The City of Blythe is participating with the Riverside County Economic Development Agency to enhance mortgage assistance programs within the community.

Program 10 Encourage Energy Conservation

Status Through proper enforcement of existing Title 24 requirements, the City of Blythe is encouraging energy conservation in new residential and commercial construction.

Program 11 Senior Home Repair

Status For the last several years, the City of Blythe has made a monetary matching grant contribution towards Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment’s application for USDA Housing Preservation Grant funds. DACE has been successful in obtaining and administering the grant funds on behalf of the City of Blythe.

The City of Blythe is participating with the Riverside County Economic Development Agency to enhance home repair programs within the community.

Program 12 Home Improvement Program (HIP) and Housing Preservation Grant (HPG)
Status For the last several years, the City of Blythe has made a monetary matching grant contribution towards Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment's application for USDA Housing Preservation Grant funds. DACE has been successful in obtaining and administering the grant funds on behalf of the City of Blythe.

Program 13 Weatherization Program
Status *Pending*

Program 14 Code Enforcement of Substandard Rental Units
Status *Ongoing*

Program 15 Monitoring of Subsidized Housing Units
Status *Pending*

Program 16 Promoting Infrastructure Improvements in Established Urban Neighborhoods
Status *See Programs 1 and 2*

Program 17 Screening of Public Owned Industrial Properties Adjacent to low/mod income residential areas
Status *Pending*

Goal III – Increase Senior Specialized Housing/Service Needs

Program 18 Additional Senior Multi-Family Housing
Status *Pending*

Program 19 Increase the Skilled Nursing Facility Capacity
Status *Pending*

Program 20 Related Transportation Services
Status Desert Roadrunner provides both fixed bus route service and dial-a-ride services within the community. Residential and commercial projects, through the entitlement process, are required to provide appropriate transportation service related amenities, including bus turn outs and shaded seating at bus stops.

Goal IV – Farmworker Housing

Program 21 Increase Home Ownership Among Farmworkers
Status *Pending*

Program 22 Migrant Worker Housing Code Enforcement
Status *Pending*

Goal V – Homeless Continuum of Care Programs

Program 23 Re-establish a Homeless Emergency Care Facility
Status *Pending*

Program 24 Establish Transitional and Permanent Housing
Status *Pending*

Program 25 Case Worker Manager
Status *Pending*

Program 26 Expanded Emergency Rental Assistance
Status *Pending*

Goal VI – Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Programs

Program 27 Expanded Rehabilitation Services for Men and Women
Status *Pending*

Goal VII – Fair Housing

Program 28 Undertake Study of Potential Disabilities Constraints
Status *Pending*

Program 29 Support of Anti-Discrimination Programs
Status *Ongoing*

Goal VIII – Public Input and Program Implementation

Program 30 Homeless Continuum of Care
Status The City of Blythe is an active participant in the (Riverside County) Homeless Continuum of Care meetings, workshops and housing summits. The City actively participated in the 2005, 2006 and 2007 homeless census and will continue to participate to the extent possible to reach the regional goal to end homelessness within the next 10 years.

Program 31 Housing Summit
Status *See Program 30*

Program 33 Process for Planning Uses of Blythe RDA Low/Mod Income Funds
Status *Ongoing*

Program 34 Monitoring and Incremental Corrections Re-evaluation
Status *Ongoing*

***Local Efforts to Remove Governmental Constraints
to the Maintenance, Improvement, and Development of Housing***

Steps that the City has taken to remove governmental constraints that hinder the development of affordable housing include the following:

1. Continued implementation of the City's General Plan, including the Housing Element.
2. Continued processing of Development Plans which include an affordable housing component as a portion of the project Development Agreements.
3. Zoning Ordinance revisions, which encourage and allow the City Council more flexibility in approving reductions in standards for Affordable Housing projects.
4. Compliance with the affordable housing provisions of the Community Redevelopment Law.
5. Allocation of CDBG funds for housing services and street improvements in lower income neighborhoods to encourage rehabilitation and revitalization.

cc: Acting City Manager
Planning Commission - Blythe
Coachella Valley Association of Governments
County of Riverside Planning Division
State Department of Housing and Community Development
Governor's Office of Planning and Research